

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1) (Currently Amended) An improved blending tool for rotation upon a blending machine shaft, such tool comprising:

(a) a shank having a long axis, at least one end, ~~and~~ an end region proximate to the end, and a tip at the end of the shank; and

(b) a riser member fixedly mounted during rotation at the end region of the shank, said riser member having an outside surface with a forward region, wherein the forward region is angled outward from the plane perpendicular to the long axis of the shank at an angle between 10 and 16 degrees; and wherein the tool is designed for rotation at tip speeds exceeding 20 meters per second.

2) (Previously Presented) The improved tool of **Claim 1**, wherein the angle relative to the plane perpendicular to the long axis of the shank is between 14 and 15.5 degrees.

3) (Previously Presented) The improved tool of **Claim 1**, wherein the entire outside surface of the riser member is angled outward from the plane perpendicular to the long axis of the shank at an angle between 10 and 16 degrees.

4) (Original) The improved tool of **Claim 1**, wherein the riser member has a generally planar shape.

5) (Previously Presented) An improved blending tool for rotation upon a blending machine shaft, such tool comprising:

(a) a shank having a long axis and a diagonal dimension, at least one end, and an end region proximate to the end; and

(b) a riser member fixedly mounted during rotation at the end region of the shank, said riser member having a height dimension and an outside surface with a forward region, wherein the forward region is angled outward from the plane perpendicular to the long axis of the shank at an angle between 10 and 16 degrees and wherein the ratio of the height dimension to the diagonal dimension is greater than 0.20.

6) (Previously Presented) The improved blending tool of **Claim 5**, wherein the shank has a diagonal dimension and the riser member has a height dimension and wherein the ratio of the height dimension to the diagonal dimension is greater than 0.25.

7) (Previously Presented) The improved blending tool of **Claim 5**, wherein the shank has a diagonal dimension and the riser member has a height dimension and wherein the ratio of the height dimension to the diagonal dimension is greater than 0.27.

8) (Previously Presented) The improved blending tool of **Claim 5**, wherein:

(a) the blending machine shaft has an axis of rotation and imparts a direction of rotation to the improved blending tool;

(b) a direction exists that is orthogonal to the long axis of the shank and to the rotation axis of the shaft; and

(c) the blending tool further comprises at least one blade extending outward from the shank wherein at least a portion of said blade is swept backward from the orthogonal direction away from the direction of rotation.

9) (Original) The improved blending tool of **Claim 8**, wherein the outwardly extending blade is fixedly mounted to the shank such that the shank is the bottom-most tool element mounted on the blending machine shaft.

10) (Original) The improved blending tool of **Claim 8**, further comprising a plurality of outwardly extending blades.

11) (Original) The improved blending tool of **Claim 1**, wherein each riser member has at least one through hole flow port.

12) (Previously Presented) The improved blending tool of **Claim 5**, wherein:

(a) each riser member has a leading and a trailing edge; and

(b) each riser member has at least one through hole flow port located closer to the trailing edge than to the leading edge.

13) (Canceled).

14) (Cancelled).

15) (Cancelled).

16) (Cancelled).

17) (Cancelled).

18) (Currently Amended) A blending machine, comprising:

(a) a chamber for holding a media to be blended;

(b) a blending tool mounted inside the chamber, said blending tool comprising both (i) a shank having a long axis, at least one end, ~~and~~ an end region proximate to the end, and a tip at the end of the shank; and (ii) a riser member fixedly mounted during rotation at the end region of the shank, said riser member having an outside surface with a forward region, wherein the forward region is angled outward from the long axis at an angle between 10 and 16 degrees; and

(c) a rotatable drive shaft, connected to the blending tool inside of the vessel, for transmitting rotational motion to the blending tool such that tip speeds of the tool exceed 20 meters per second.

19) (Original) The blending machine of **Claim 18**, wherein the angle to the long axis of the shank is between 14 and 15.5 degrees.

20) (Original) The blending machine of **Claim 18**, wherein entire outside surface of the riser member is angled outward from the long axis of the shank at an angle between 10 and 16 degrees.

21) (Original) The blending machine of **Claim 18**, wherein the riser member has a generally planar shape.

22) (Previously Presented) A blending machine comprising:

(a) a chamber for holding a media to be blended;

(b) a blending tool mounted inside the chamber, said blending tool comprising both (i) a shank of the tool having a long axis and a diagonal dimension, at least one end, and an end region proximate to the end and (ii) a riser member fixedly mounted during rotation at the end region of the shank, said riser member of the tool having a height dimension and an outside surface with a forward region, wherein the forward region is angled outward from the long axis at an angle between 10 and 16 degrees wherein the ratio of the height dimension to the diagonal dimension is greater than 0.20; and

(c) a rotatable drive shaft, connected to the blending tool inside of the vessel, for transmitting rotational motion to the blending tool.

23) (Previously Presented) The blending machine of **Claim 22**, wherein:

(a) the blending machine shaft has an axis of rotation and imparts a direction of rotation to the improved blending tool;

(b) a direction exists that is orthogonal to the long axis of the shank and to the rotation axis of the shaft; and

(c) the blending tool further comprises at least one blade extending outward from the shank wherein at least a portion of said blade is swept backward from the orthogonal direction away from the direction of rotation.

24) (Original) The blending machine of **Claim 23**, further comprising a plurality of outwardly extending blades.

25) (Original) The blending machine of **Claim 23**, wherein the outwardly extending blade is fixedly mounted to the shank such that the shank is the bottom-most tool element mounted on the blending machine shaft.

26) (Original) The blending machine of **Claim 18**, wherein each riser member has at least one through hole flow port.

27) (Previously Presented) The blending machine of **Claim 22**, wherein:

- (a) each riser member has a leading and a trailing edge; and
- (b) each riser member has at least one through hole flow port located closer to the trailing edge than to the leading edge.

28) (Previously Presented) The blending machine of **Claim 18**, wherein:

- (a) the chamber has a wall;
- (b) the riser member has a leading edge; and
- (c) at least a portion of the leading edge is positioned within 6 millimeters of the wall.

29) (Canceled)

30) (Canceled)

31) (Canceled)

32) (Previously Presented) The improved blending tool of **Claim 8**,
wherein:

(a) the improved blending tool is mounted inside a blending
chamber having a bottom; and

(b) the blade has a curved shape that positions a portion of the
blade proximate to the chamber bottom.

33) (Previously Presented) The improved blending tool of **Claim 8**,
wherein:

(a) the improved blending tool is mounted inside a blending
chamber having a bottom; and

(b) each of the plurality of blades has a general "U" shape that
positions a portion of each blade proximate to the chamber bottom.